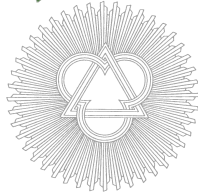

Most Holy Trinity Seminary Newsletter



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My dear Catholic people,

We are approaching the end of our academic year, but have already started a summer course program for our most advanced students. These intensive courses during the summer will enable them to be ordained in 2027.

The reason we are doing this is that we are desperate for priests. We have far more demand than we can fulfill. This demand is owing primarily to our internet presence, through which we have convinced many people of our theological position. We also enjoy a reputation for well-trained clergy.

The upcoming SSPX consecrations. YouTube is filled with much comment and controversy about these consecrations. As I said in my last newsletter, the Society of Saint Pius X is already schismatic, if we hypothetically consider Leo to be a true pope. To conduct an unauthorized apostolate against the will of a sitting pope is definitely schismatic, even before any declaration. In this sense, the upcoming excommunication will be merely a formality by which is declared a schism which already exists.

The modernist inmates of the Vatican have been playing a cat-and-mouse game with the SSPX for many years, knowing full well, since 1988, that their four bishops would not last forever. The modernists were hoping that the SSPX, faced with the problem of deceased and aging bishops, would cave in on Vatican II, accept its heretical teachings, and be “regularized.” Then they would become just one more side chapel of Tradition in the Novus Ordo cathedral, or better yet, just another animal in the Novus Ordo zoo.

To their credit, however, SSPX has rejected the heresies of Vatican II, and is now willing to endure the excommunication.

The atmosphere, however, has changed a great deal since 1988, the year of the first set of consecrations.

In the first place, the Novus Ordo religion is far more radical than it was in 1988. John Paul II was “pope” at that time, who, although a radical modernist, nonetheless was successful in portraying himself as a conservative or moderate in the application of the changes of Vatican II. He was extremely popular. Yet his radicalism was manifested in his extreme forms of ecumenism, especially at As-

sisi. These acts, however, were dismissed by most Catholics as merely attempts to break down religious barriers, and to unite everyone. It was the spirit of the times. Because he condemned abortion and had a devotion to the Virgin Mary, however, he maintained his reputation for conservatism. For this reason, the 1988 excommunications had a serious effect on the SSPX, alienating, as they did, a significant number of their adherents.

The Fraternity of Saint Peter (FSSP) and similar organizations were created in 1988 and thereafter in order to satisfy those who were willing to accept Vatican II but at the same time desired to preserve the traditional Latin Mass.

In the second place, the SSPX is much bigger than it was in 1988. It counts about 710 priests, and has a worldwide apostolate. They are the fifth largest religious congregation of priests in the world.

In the third place, Catholics have lived through the many years of Francis and now one year of his successor, Leo. These two have removed the mask of conservatism from the days of John Paul II and Ratzinger. As a result, there is a much stronger traditional movement now than there was in 1988. By “traditional movement” should be understood all of its brands and shades. Some are “Recognize and Resist;” some are “Latin Massers;” some are “Hand Wringers/Eye Rollers,” i.e., Novus Ordo loyalists who complain constantly about the daily outrages, gnashing their teeth because Novus Ordite clergy are not acting like Catholics. Then there are the sedevacantists. They all have one thing in common, however, which is a distaste for the Novus Ordo and some form of opposition to it and the Vatican II reforms in general. YouTube is brimming with representations of all of these currents.

In the fourth place, there is the general decline of the Novus Ordo, and the rise of traditionalism. Over the nearly forty years since 1988, traditionalism has increased in popularity, and the Novus Ordo continues its dizzying decline, as they lose adherents, churches, schools, seminaries, convents, and priests. True, there are big crowds in Saint Peter’s Square, but how many of these are true Catholics? How many adhere to all the dogmas of the Catholic Faith? How many, for example, consider artificial birth control to be a mortal sin? How many are going to church every Sunday?

For example, in April of 2025, a Pew Research survey discovered these statistics about U.S. “Catholics:”

84% held that Catholics should be permitted to use birth control;

83% said that Catholics should be permitted to use in vitro fertilization;

76% said that Catholics who are unmarried but living together romantically should be allowed to receive communion;

68% said that women should be allowed to become deacons;

63% said that priests should be allowed to marry;

60% said that priests should be allowed to give blessings to same-sex couples;

59% said that women should be allowed to become priests;

50% said that the Church should recognize the marriages of gay and lesbian couples.

So the conclusion is that 84% of those who call themselves Catholics, are not Catholics. For 84% hold to the *heresy* of artificial birth control. At least half of them condone unnatural sex acts. But pertinacious heresy automatically severs a baptized Catholic from membership in the Catholic Church. Heresy is *pertinacious* if the person holding the heretical doctrine knows that it is contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church.

It is for this reason that we require Novus Ordites returning from the Novus Ordo religion to reject these heresies and adhere to the true Faith. If someone professes a heresy, his pertinacity is presumed unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Leo XIV just had one million attend his outdoor Mass in Madrid. But how many of these were actually Catholics, that is, baptized Catholics who profess all the truths of the Catholic Faith?

In a Spanish contraception survey of 2016, 71.1% of women of childbearing age, between 14 and 49 years, responded that they used contraceptive methods.

Young people, on the other hand, are more and more attracted to the traditional Latin Mass. This is evident from the average age of those attending the traditional Latin Mass in any form, offered by any group.

In other words, Vatican II is a big flop.

Will the excommunications backfire on the Novus Ordo? I ask this question, inasmuch as the SSPX is popularly seen as the “face” of pre-Vatican II catholicism. I say “popularly seen” because we know that their theological and pastoral positions are quite different from what pre-Vatican II catholicism demands. Nonetheless, because of their size and prominence, the Vatican modernists, by excommunicating SSPX, may be seen by Catholics in general as excommunicating catholicism itself. Continuity with the past is the “pedigree” of Roman Catholicism. It cannot undergo substantial change without denying itself. Everyone knows this, at least implicitly. Ratzinger understood it, and I think that is why they dumped him. Although he was himself a radical modernist even in the 1950’s, he did understand the need for gradualism in applying the apostatical changes of Vatican II. For this reason, he was the most dangerous of all the modernists, that is, in relation to the

Catholic rejection of Modernism. To this day, many prominent traditionalists see Ratzinger’s “reign” as the “good old days.” They would be willing to accept the Novus Ordo apostasy if were spoon-fed and sugar coated, as it was under Benedict XVI. Indeed, he was the worst enemy of the traditional movement, whereas Francis and Leo are its best friends, for they have unmasked the Novus Ordo apostasy in all of its ugliness.

Vatican II is the central issue. If the SSPX were merely asking to be a Latin Mass organization, they would certainly have been given a green light. However, just as talks broke down in 2012 over doctrinal issues (words of Benedict XVI), so this time the impasse was about Vatican II’s teachings and subsequent teachings of the Novus Ordo.

Will the SSPX finally learn? Ever since its inception in 1970, the SSPX has sought to be a traditional branch of the Novus Ordo. Only twice was this goal temporarily abandoned: (1) from 1976 to 1979, after the suspension of Archbishop Lefebvre in 1976, and (2) from 1988 to 1991, during which time Archbishop Lefebvre said that the SSPX should not seek any accord or compromise with the modernist inhabitants of the Vatican until such time as they should return to the Catholic Faith.

Not long after the Archbishop’s death in 1991, however, the management of the SSPX did pursue such an accord, culminating in its failure in 2012. Ever since 2012 they seem to have been soft in their criticism of the Novus Ordo, in the hope that the modernists would one day approve of their consecrating bishops.

Will the SSPX now, after fifty-six years of existence, and many false starts, finally realize that an ecclesiastical coexistence with the modernists is impossible?

What they should do is to respond to the excommunication by a barrage of arguments against Vatican II and its effluent, i.e., the teachings and reforms of the Novus Ordo “popes.” in the wake of Vatican II. The weak spot of the Novus Ordo is the fact that they have promulgated a new religion which is a rupture with the past. It is the refusal to accept this new religion which is the cause of the excommunication. The excommunication will give the SSPX a pulpit from which to speak and to accuse the Novus Ordo of its deviations from Roman Catholicism, and the whole world will be listening.

Let us hope and pray that they do precisely this. Perhaps when the illusion of coexistence disappears from their eyes, they will discover some theological realities which will make their position entirely consistent.

Please pray for Father Despósito.

Father Despósito has come down with an aortic stenosis, which is a narrowing of the heart’s aortic valve, which restricts blood flow from the heart to the rest of the body.

He has been complaining recently of intense fatigue, so much so that he would be down for days at a time. He went to the doctor. They gave him a complete check-up and found that the aortic stenosis is the problem.

Father Despósito was operated on when he was six years old for a genetic heart problem.

He is due to receive open heart surgery on July 1st, during which they will insert a mechanical valve. This should resolve the problem, making him more energetic.

Father Despósito is very valuable to us, even absolutely necessary. He teaches philosophy and dogmatic theology. Not all priests are qualified to teach these courses.

They also told him that there is very little chance (2%) that he would not survive the operation. Apparently these operations are fairly

routine. Recovery time, they said, could take fourteen weeks.

A full house? We are not sure just yet, but it may happen that we will fill up the seminary this September. Ordinarily we have twenty-two rooms for seminarians, but because Father Barnes is here filling in for Father Despósito, he is using one of these rooms. That leaves us with room for twenty-one. It may well be necessary to send two seminarians to Sacred Heart Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where there is a large rectory. They can take their courses by Zoom.

We must count on our benefactors, therefore, to help support the cost of training these seminarians.

Without priests, there would be no nuns, no brothers, no religious congregations or religious orders, no sacraments, no faithful, no saints, no Catholic schools, no Church, no Mass, no blessings, and no possibility of going to heaven.

Because priests are essential to everything the Church does, it goes without saying that the training of priests is the highest and most important function of any of the Church’s institutions.

It is for this reason that young men should seriously think about becoming priests, as the need for priests is acute in the present time. Let them set aside worldly pursuits and concerns, and dedicate themselves to God’s holy work in the priesthood. What is more meritorious in the eyes of God: being a good accountant or being a good priest? And what is the purpose of life, except to merit eternal salvation?

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn
Rector